

HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Rules for Management of Cemetery

1 Preamble

- 1.1** Holcombe is privileged to have the old church of St. Andrew in such a beautiful and peaceful location to be the focus for the parish's cemetery. The management of the extension to the north of the church lies with the Parish Council, the earlier graveyard to the west and south being run by the Parochial Church Council.
- 1.2** These rules are framed to ensure that all applicants for burials in the Parish Council cemetery receive fair and equitable treatment: while making sure that the long-term interests of this sensitive site are secured and in particular that the atmosphere of simple dignity is preserved, in keeping with the age of the ancient church and its surroundings of woodland.

2 Entitlement

- 2.1** Use will be restricted to those with a strong local connection with the parish of Holcombe who were born or lived in Holcombe.
- 2.2** Applicants from neighbouring parishes may be considered at the Parish Council's discretion if a strong family connection can be shown, subject always to the availability of space.

3 Religious Denomination

- 3.1** There will be no restriction placed on the religious faith of those buried here: provided that the other rules are observed and the conventions of Christian burial are respected.

4 Consecration

- 4.1** The cemetery will not be consecrated ground. It will be open to the Minister officiating at the interment to consecrate each particular plot in the appropriate manner.

5 Grave Plots

- 5.1** The cemetery land remains in the ownership of the Parish Council.
- 5.2** Plots will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis and cannot be reserved in advance. It will be possible to secure exclusive use of a plot for a single burial or for later family burials on payment of an additional fee. Re-opening of a grave already buried in, for a subsequent interment will require written permission of the person making the arrangement, or their authorised agent. Exclusive use rights will expire 40 years from the date they were first made unless they are renewed.
- 5.3** Grave plots will be spaced 2.4 metres east-west, 1.2 metres north-south, these sizes including for the spaces between graves. Infants will be allocated in a separate area with smaller plots. Depending upon ground conditions it may be necessary to allocate plots in different parts of the cemetery at times.
- 5.4** All parts of a coffin must be at least 3' below ground level
- 5.5** 6" of compacted earth must separate a coffin from any below it
- 5.6** Graves are normally to be dug by hand. If use of powered machinery is unavoidable, permission must be obtained from the Parish Council in advance and additional charges may be necessary to cover reinstatement.
- 5.7** Each plot will be uniquely numbered and a register kept of all interments.

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6 Interments

- 6.1** Applications for allocation of a grave space must be made in writing using the Holcombe Parish Council application form at least 48 hours before starting work on any grave. Applications by telephone only will not be acted upon. The Clerk will acknowledge the request and state the fee. The Clerk will confirm the arrangement and allocate a grave space on receipt of the certificates required by law. Times available for funerals are 10.00 to 16.00 during the winter months and 10.00 to 18.00 when British Summer Time is in force. No funerals will be permitted on Sundays or Public Holidays. Times fixed for funerals refer to the time of arrival of the procession at the cemetery.
- 6.2** The person organising the funeral must arrange for:
- A priest, minister or other person to officiate
 - Excavation of the allocated grave or cremation space
 - Sufficient bearers to convey the coffin with due reverence
- 6.3** Persons bear coffins at their own risk. The Council accepts no liability.
- 6.4** Interment may only take place when the funeral director confirms receipt of the Council's fee.
- 6.5** No-one acting on behalf of the Council may accept a gratuity.
- 6.6** Other rules:
- The Council's permission is needed before scattering cremated ashes
 - No coffin may be opened, interred open or removed
 - Only HM Coroner, the Courts or a Chief Constable may order removal of a body
 - Only the Home Secretary may order an exhumation
- 6.7** If, in the Clerk's opinion, there is a dispute or doubt over ownership of the Grant, the Council reserves the right to refuse, cancel or delay any burial or interment.

7 Cremations

- 7.1** Cremation plots will be 600mm square, this size to include the walkway between plots. Plots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and cannot be reserved in advance. It will be possible to secure exclusive use of plot for a single or subsequent interment: exclusive use conditions apply as for grave plots (see paragraph 5.2). Subject to the restrictions on the space available for memorials, the Parish Council places no limit on the number of interments in a single cremation plot.
- 7.2** All burials of cremated remains should be in a container that will disintegrate in contact with the soil, or be poured into a sufficient hollow in the ground and then covered with soil. 'Burial' does not include scattering in the air or on the surface. Scattering is not permitted within the cemetery. In addition to interments in the area designated by the Council for cremated remains, ashes may also be buried in an existing designated grave plot, under the same conditions as otherwise for multiple uses of graves (see paragraph 5.2).
- 7.3** Subject to availability of space and otherwise qualifying under 'Entitlement', memorials may be installed for those whose ashes have been scattered elsewhere, or whose remains cannot be returned to Holcombe for some reason.

8 Rights of Way

- 8.1** A right of way has been granted by the Diocese, through the old graveyard solely for the use of the cemetery for its intended purpose; i.e. Interments and visitors to the graves. No general right of way is established by this use. No restriction is placed on which hours or days of week the cemetery is open, other than only between sunrise and sunset.

9 Prevention of Nuisance

- 9.1** Dogs are only permitted in the cemetery on leads and owners must pick up after them. Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Wilful damage, the playing of sports or games, wilful and unlawful disturbance to burial parties or individual mourners, or committing any kind of nuisance within the cemetery are liable for prosecution for every such offence.

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10 Firearms

10.1 Carrying and discharging firearms are permitted only for military burials taking place with official sanction: permission must be obtained from the Parish Council in advance.

11 Monuments & Benches (Max of 4 benches in the cemetery)

11.1 Monuments are to be placed at the west end of grave plots, or within the designated area for cremation plots. Benches will be placed away from grave plots and may be relocated as required. No memorial may be installed without the exclusive use fee having been paid and only with advance written permission of the Parish Council. Details of the regulations governing memorials are at Annex A.

11.2 The Parish Council requires that designs of monuments & benches be submitted for approval in advance with the correct fee. The Council will need full details of the inscription: while the Council has no objection in principle to the use of nick-names and family endearments it reserves the right to refuse inscriptions considered unsuitable, at the Council's absolute discretion.

11.3 The Council allows only masons listed in the *British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons* or in the *Register of Qualified Memorial Fixers* to erect or work on memorials.

11.4 Memorials erected with the Council's permission remain at the sole risk of the owner. The Council takes no responsibility for any damage, however, caused.

11.5 An owner is responsible for keeping the memorial in good repair. If an owner fails to do this, the Council may repair or remove the memorial and recover costs.

11.6 Funeral directors are responsible for:

- Digging the grave, making a tidy temporary soil heap and back filling
- Placing a marker on the grave that shows clearly the name of the deceased
- Ensuring that digging machines do not damage grass, paths or gates
- Ensuring removal from the Cemetery of all surplus soil, materials and waste
- Levelling the grave surface within 3 months of interment
- Maintaining and levelling grass on the grave for 12 months

11.7 The Council has overall legal responsibility for Cemetery safety and must ensure, as far as reasonably practical, it maintains both in a safe condition.

11.8 A memorial mason is legally liable for the work he or she carries out.

11.9 The Council's policy and procedures follow the guidance from the *Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)*.

12 Safety inspections

12.1 The Council will:

- Inspect the safety of all memorials once every five years
- Give at least 28 days' notice of an inspection and invite the public to attend
- Communicate via its website and noticeboards, at the Cemetery and in the Parish magazine
- Monitor each year any memorials assessed as not fully stable
- Keep records of memorial inspections and results

12.2 A trained councillor will lead each five-year visual inspection and hand test of stability.

12.3 The Council prohibits lone working, requires wearing of suitable gloves and footwear and demonstration by the lead councillor of the safe technique of hand testing memorials.

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12.4 Memorials will be assessed using the *ICCM* procedure and assigned a risk priority:

- Priority 1 – immediate action required to make memorial safe or stop public access
- Priority 2 – no immediate danger but not fully stable so monitor each 12 months
- Priority 3 – perfectly stable so inspect in five years

12.5 A dangerous or unstable memorial is one that will move and continue to fall to the ground with an exertion of a force of 25kg or less.

12.6 The Council will use a temporary support system to make safe such memorials.

12.7 The Council will then:

- Place a notice on the memorial warning that it has been found to be unsafe
- Contact all the owners it can and ask each to make the memorial permanently safe
- Publish inspection results on its website, noticeboards and at the Cemetery

12.8 If needed, the Council will make a further attempt to contact owners after 3 months. With no response or a negative, the Council, at its discretion, will make the memorial permanently safe by partial burial, removal, repair or other means.

13 Maintenance and care

13.1 Memorial owners are responsible for the care of memorials they have erected.

13.2 The Council maintains grass, paths and all other aspects of the Cemetery.

13.3 The Council expects owners and those caring for graves to:

- Remove within 30 days any floral tributes etc. laid on the grave at the funeral
- Put dead flowers, wreaths, weeds etc. from graves in the refuse bin
- Use artificial flowers only from 1 November to 31 March, then removing them
- Keep the grave space neat and tidy

13.4 Trees, shrubs and other perennials must not be planted without express permission of the Parish Council.

13.5 No ornamental edging of any sort is permitted around the grave mound.

13.6 Grave plots may however be planted with native early spring bulbs, but only aconite, snowdrop and crocus may be planted without specific permission

13.7 The Council reserves the right to remove any unsightly items from graves.

13.8 Council consent is required to plant, fell, prune or otherwise alter any tree or shrub.

13.9 The Council reserves the right to prune, cut down or remove any unauthorised plants.

14 Decoration of Graves.

14.1 No glass or china ornaments or vases are allowed. Deer have been known to eat flower arrangements within the Cemetery. An experienced gardener has suggested the following plants which deer don't seem to like:

- Fuchsias
- Sedums
- Winter heathers
- Hydrangeas &
- Heathers

14.2 It was also suggested that anything spiky or prickly such as holly mixed in with a display might also act as a deterrent.

14.3 Vases are permitted that will fit within the slab on which the headstone is mounted or, for cremations, within the areas designated for the memorial. Vases for graves should not be taller than 300mm and for cremations 150mm, but may be smaller if desired; they should be of a design that will not blow over.

15 Neglected Graves.

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15.1 The Parish Council reserves the right to clear untended graves of neglected decorations, having first given one calendar month's notice to the grave owner or their authorised agent at their last recorded address.

16 Water Supply

16.1 There is no water supply available at the cemetery: users must provide their own if wishing to water flowers, clean memorials, etc. Glass or china containers should not be used as water carriers and must not be left behind in the cemetery. Abandoned water carriers will be disposed of.

17 Waste.

17.1 All dead flowers, wreaths, trimmings or other refuse must be taken away or placed in the container provided. No refuse of any sort is to be thrown over the wall or hedge.

17.2 Surplus sub-soil arising is to be removed from the site and not accumulated within the cemetery nor on adjoining land. Undertakers and gravediggers are to allow for this disposal in their fees.

18 Scale of Fees.

18.1 The charges are listed separately. The scale of fees will be reviewed annually in April of each year by the Parish Council.

19 Payments to Undertakers, Gravediggers, Memorial Masons, etc.

19.1 The Parish Council will not themselves employ any of these trades and users must arrange to make payment direct.

20 Correspondence.

20.1 All communications should in the first instance be directed to the Clerk to the Parish Council. In emergency, contact may be made with the Chairman of the Parish Council, or any other Councillor in their absence.

20.2 Copies of this document go to:

- Local ministers for C of E, Methodist and RC churches
- Clerk to Parochial Church Council.
- Clerks to neighbouring Parish Council.
- MDC Environmental Services
- Local undertakers, memorial masons, gravediggers
- Adjacent landowner
- Holcombe Parish Website

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Annex A

Memorials and Benches

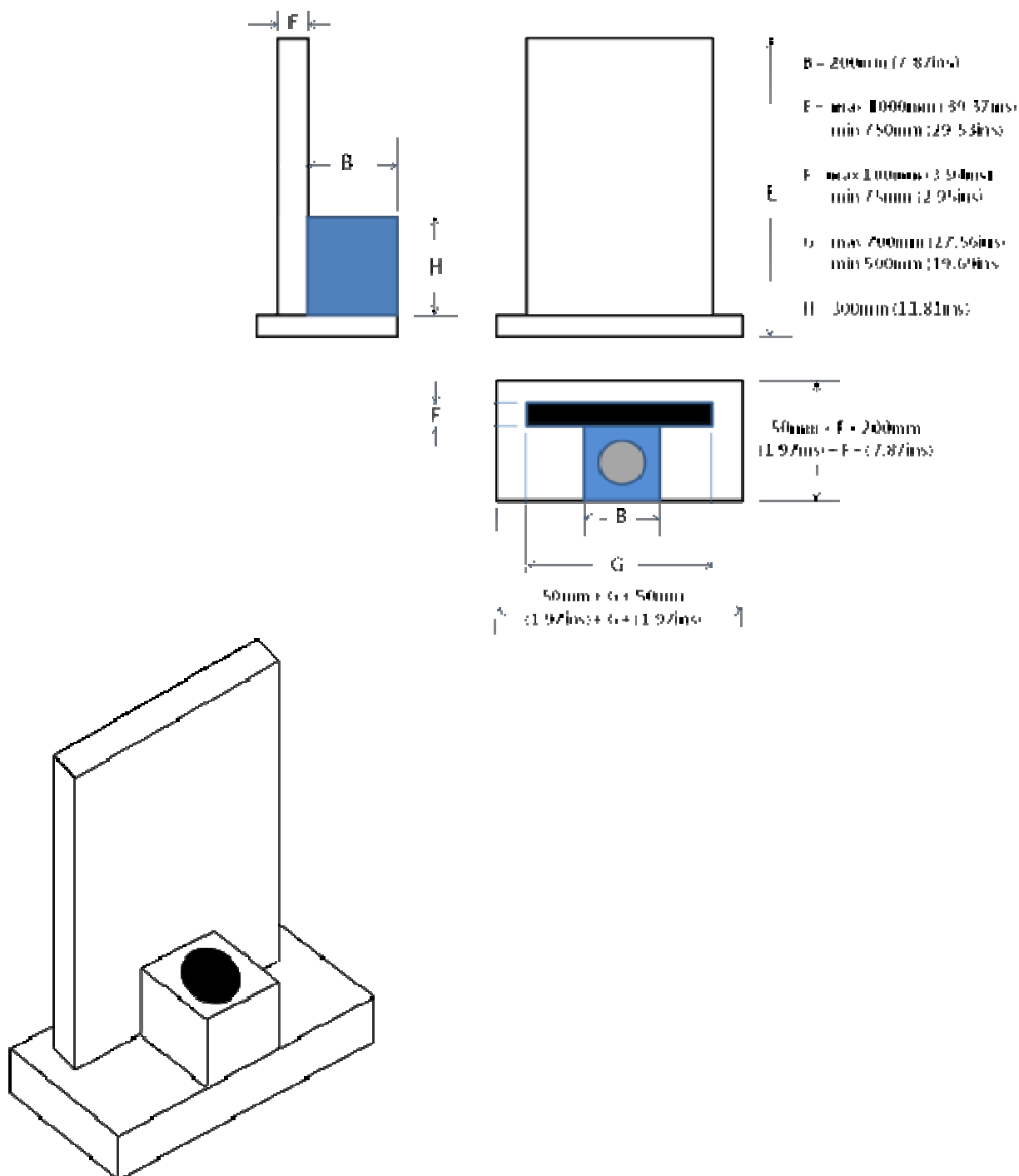
- A1 No headstone, tablet, monument or bench may be brought into the cemetery without the written permission of the Parish Council. All memorials must be permanently marked with the number of their allocated grave or cremation plot. All headstones must be installed with their front face in alignment with the first headstone in that line (*if the headstone is the first of a new line then as directed by the clerk to the Parish Council*).
- A2 No horizontal ledgers, kerbs, railings, stone or other chippings etc. are permitted.
- A3 Memorials may not include pictures, photographs, bird baths or statues.

Headstones

- A4 Maximum dimensions 1000mm high x 700mm wide x 100mm thick
- Minimum dimensions 750mm high x 500mm wide x 75mm thick.

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- A5 A base forming an integral part of the design of a headstone is permitted if it does not extend more than 50mm to the rear and sides, with 200mm to the front beyond the headstone.
- A6 The headstone shall be fixed in all cases on a foundation slab (not necessarily of quarried stone) which is itself fixed flush with the turf and extends by a minimum of 75mm clear all round. Maximum plan area of slab is 1000mm N-S and 500mm E-W.
- A7 Monuments may be of natural stone or wood. Stones traditionally used in local buildings or for gravestones in local churchyards or closely similar to them in colour and texture are strongly preferred.
- A8 Stones shall not be polished in any way so as to reflect. Black granite, pearl granite, white or black marble, plastics, synthetic materials of any sort, reconstructed stone, tiles, ceramics, or metals are not allowed.

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- A9 Lettering must be inscribed into the material of the headstone and not built up, nor inscribed on a separate material which is affixed to the headstone.
- A10 No advertisement or trade mark shall be inscribed on a monument, with the exception of the mason's name which may be inscribed at side or rear of the headstone in unpainted letters no more than 13 mm high. No hewing or dressing of memorials will be permitted in the cemetery. Installation of memorials must take place in normal working hours, and not on Sundays or Public Holidays. Any person working on memorials in the cemetery must carry identification and a copy of the Parish Council's permission, which will not be given without evidence of adequate public liability insurance.
- A11 Memorials and benches must be kept in good repair by the owner and if not so kept they may be removed in the interests of safety at the Council's discretion.

Vases

- A12 Maximum size of 300mm high x 200mm x 200mm for use on grave plots: half that size to mark interment of ashes. Vases may only be placed at the head of the grave, within the area of the mounting slab.

Memorials for Ashes

- A13 Restrictions on materials and inscriptions for headstones apply equally for markers for ashes. For single interment a plain, predominantly horizontal plaque of maximum plan area 200mm x 300mm is permitted; inscriptions should be in landscape format. For subsequent interments a second 200mm x 300mm plaque may be added within the designated area, or a 400mm x 300mm single tablet may be substituted, leaving space for subsequent inscriptions if desired. One small vase only may be placed within the area allocated for the plaque.

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Annex B

Layout of Cremation Plots

- B1 Layout is based on a 2.4m x 1.2m module, which is the grave plot size.
- B2 Each cremation plot is 600mm square, the intention of cremations being to save precious land.
- B3 The memorials area in each plot is offset to allow access paths on one side only, i.e. on alternate sides, giving a 400mm wide access to walk in. (The other gaps are wide enough to trim between with a strimmer.) This means that maximum reach to attend to the far side of memorials is comparable with the access either side of a standard grave plot.
- B4 The transverse gaps are strimmer width only, 200 mm.
- B5 The area for the memorial is 300mm x 400mm: large enough for two 300mm x 200mm (landscape format) plaques.
- B6 Vases are to be integrated into the memorial area and not allowed to stray into the grass between memorials

Revision History

Date	Detail Revised
May 2010	Addition of rules relating to Memorial Benches.
Oct 2010	Addition of imperial unit to the metric sizes stated in the rules.
Oct 2010	Addition of diagrams to aid clarity of the rules relating to the size and design of headstones.
Oct 2010	Change to the headstone design to allow vase to stand on the base of the headstone.
Jan 2015	List of plants which deer may not eat included item 13
08/08/16	Reference to built-in vases not being allowed has been removed from Annexe A, A3
04/04/17	Various items added re memorial safety & maintenance, grave preparation & safety inspections